



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY NEWS RELEASE

Department of Toxic Substances Control

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State certifies environmental cleanup at Oakland East Bay Habitat for Humanity site

Berkeley – The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) today announced certification of the hazardous substances cleanup at the East Bay Habitat for Humanity site located at 10900 Edes Avenue in East Oakland, where 26 single-family, low-income homes will be built. DTSC certification means that all environmental cleanup activities are complete. The site received an "unrestricted use" certification, the Department's most rigorous and health protective standard.

East Bay Habitat for Humanity was able to use state and federal Brownfields funds to assist in the cleanup of the site. In October 2002, DTSC awarded East Bay Habitat for Humanity a \$425,000 low-interest loan through the state's Cleanup Loans and Environmental Assistance to Neighborhoods (CLEAN) program. CLEAN funds are used to encourage redevelopment of "Brownfields," which are properties with real or perceived contamination that are underused due to cleanup costs and liability concerns.

East Bay Habitat for Humanity used \$272,000 of the state's CLEAN loan. Additional funding for the cleanup was provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through one of its first competitive Brownfields Cleanup Grants for \$200,000.

"Governor Schwarzenegger has made clean up and reuse of Brownfield sites a priority. This project will ultimately return this parcel to more productive use by providing much needed affordable housing in the East Bay. We are very pleased to announce the completion of this cleanup that will now enable the construction of homes by East Bay Habitat for Humanity to move forward," said Leonard Robinson, Acting Director of DTSC.

"With the state's seal of approval, East Bay Habitat for Humanity can now move forward in the next phase of redeveloping this long idled property," said Nancy Lindsay, Deputy Director of the EPA's Superfund Program in the Pacific Southwest Office. "This project represents a great example of environmental regulators working hand in hand with local groups to turn what were once eyesores into community assets."

The two-acre site historically was used as a nursery from 1926 through 1952, and as a truck dismantling and salvage yard between 1952 and 1996. Soil and groundwater investigations conducted at the site in 2001 and 2002 found elevated levels of lead, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and petroleum aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) in the soil. No harmful levels of chemicals were found in groundwater at the site.

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From August through October 2004, almost 3,000 tons of contaminated soil were removed from the Site and disposed of at an appropriate landfill. Samples were collected following these activities to verify that site soils met DTSC's residential cleanup goals and that the site is safe for residential use.

"We are very happy that this project is moving forward as planned, providing affordable, healthy housing to low-income families," said Jim Bergdoll, Housing Development Director for East Bay Habitat for Humanity. "We are grateful to DTSC and many other agencies for the financial and technical support to make this cleanup possible. The project still needs the support of many volunteers, corporations, and foundations in the construction stage, but we are confident in the success of this ambitious project."

East Bay Habitat for Humanity, which purchased the Edes Avenue site in August 2002, estimates that total development costs for the two, three, and four-bedroom homes will be approximately \$6 million. The construction of the homes is expected to begin by Summer 2006, and to be completed by early 2008. In addition to the environmental benefits of cleaning up the harmful materials previously left at the site, the construction of the homes will be done with environmental sustainability in mind. East Bay Habitat uses advanced sustainability practices in design and construction which significantly minimize environmental impacts.

The East Bay Habitat for Humanity site is one of thousands of Brownfield sites in California that are located in urban or rural industrial settings. DTSC is aggressively working with other public agencies and private entities to remediate Brownfield properties throughout California.

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The Department of Toxic Substances Control's mission is to restore, protect, and enhance the environment and ensure public health, environmental quality and economic vitality by regulating hazardous waste, conducting and overseeing cleanups, and developing and promoting pollution prevention.